



A' Level Religion, Philosophy and Ethics

SIL 2026

There are 10 questions in this booklet, and you're expected to answer every one with care. Please note, we will not be doing this topic in class, hence it is important that you go through it carefully as it is a popular exam question. There will be retrieval tests on this work in September.

It must be pointed out that if you don't use the holidays to revise all your Year 12 content, this will be a wasted opportunity, and you will struggle with the weight of new content in Year 13. So, please help yourself by keeping on top of the work... you deserve the best!

Islam, Theme 2E

Please note, we will not be doing this topic in class, hence it is really important that you go through it carefully as it is a popular exam question.

There will be retrieval tests on this work in September.

Note: You can access a video version of the lessons filmed during covid here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRYkDJCUq-c> Watch from 5:54 onwards...

Different types of giving in Islam

1. Read the text below. Create a brainstorm on the 'different types of giving in Islam'

Use quotes where relevant...

There are three types of 'spending' or giving:

- Sadaqat: voluntary giving
- Zakat: the annual donation of 2.5% that 'purifies', from the Arabic verb tazaka, 'to purify'
- Khums: meaning 'a fifth', important in Shi'ism today.

Sadaqat

This is giving in excess of zakat. In essence it is giving freely from one's own heart and not in response to a specific religious duty. Historically the objects of sadaqat were the same as zakat as defined in Sura 9:60 (see below) as the term sadaqat also included the concept of zakat (obligatory giving); however, sadaqat today has come to mean any kind of voluntary giving in the broadest sense.

Today sadaqat is encouraged as an act that brings merit and spiritual benefit when practised on a regular basis, incurring divine favour and an investment in one's future in preparation for the afterlife.

Sura 7:156 states 'And ordain for us that which is good, in this life and in the Hereafter: for we have turned unto Thee.' He said: 'With My punishment I visit whom I will; but My mercy extendeth to all things. That (mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our signs.' (Yusuf Ali)

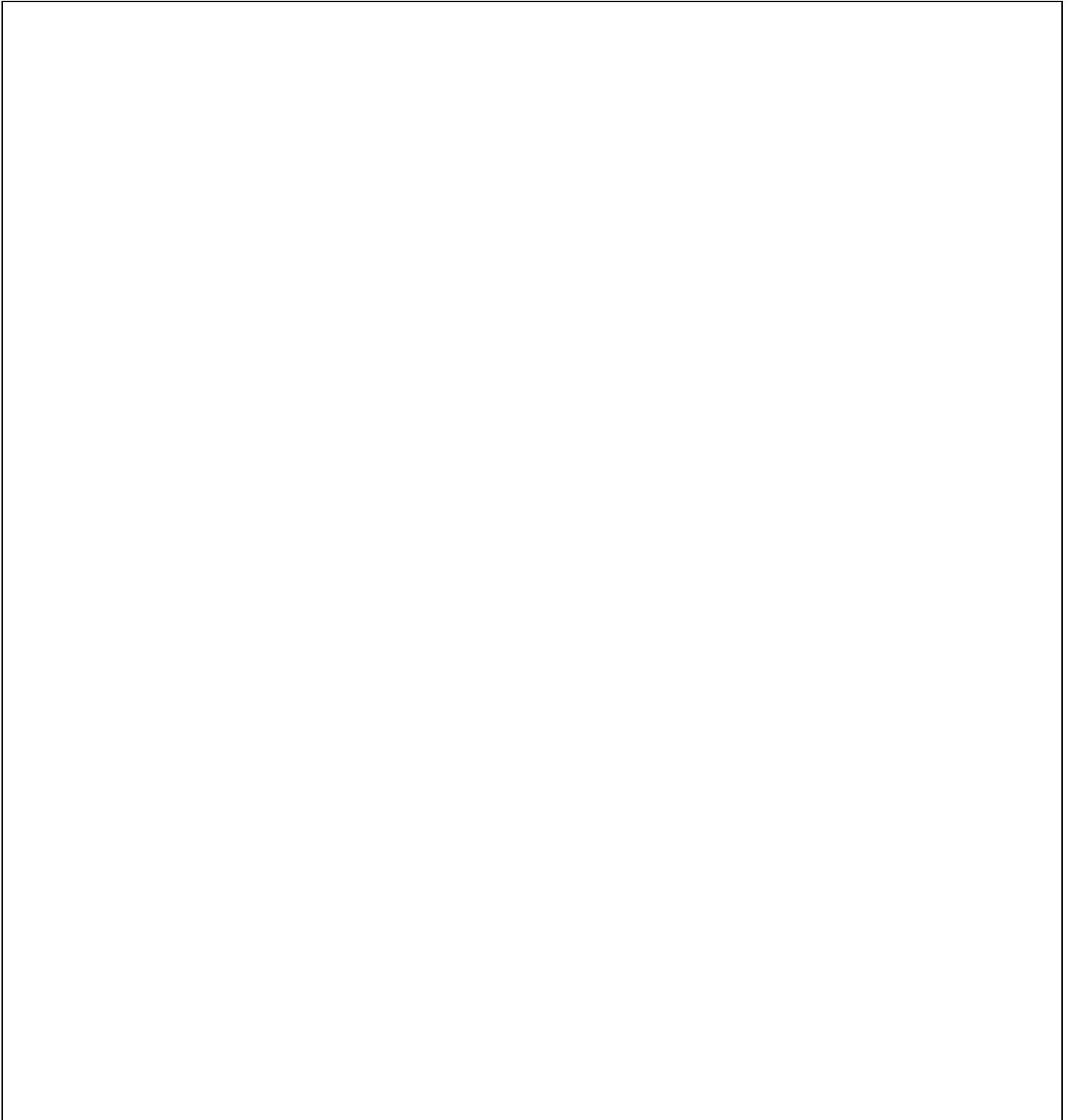
Khums

The concept of khums originated with the idea of war booty at the time of Muhammad, twenty per cent of which went to Muhammad and his family. Indeed, the word khums means 'a fifth'.

Although this was not practised widely after the death of Muhammad, it has become an important means of financial support in Shi'ism for the leaders who coordinate its distribution.

Khums is much broader than zakat in that it is more specifically defined than just surplus income. It covers all sorts of earnings; for example, originally things such as profits from investments in lands, riches from war and discovered treasure. Today, like zakat, it is calculated after basic needs have been met and covers all business investments, trading, agriculture, savings and earnings, inheritance and gifts.

1. Create a brainstorm on the 'different types of giving in Islam'

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a brainstorming activity. It occupies most of the page below the heading.

2. Read the text below and complete the following sentences over-page to construct the answer to: Explain the reasons for giving in Islam. (A01)

The reasons for giving in Islam: obedience; compassion; personal sacrifice; value of benefits gained

Being the obligatory fourth pillar as it is literally understood, it is evident that giving is encouraged at all times.

'And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.' Sura 17:26 (Yusuf Ali)

Indeed, giving is often popular at special times in the Muslim calendar such as Hajj. Giving promotes a support for the ummah and provides it with its economic base. It is a clear link to Muhammad and his perfect example and an extension of the first community the prophet established.

It is the rich who also benefit from the opportunity of giving and sharing. As mentioned at the start of this section, it is an opportunity for wealthy Muslims to enact and play their part in actualising the will of Allah. The spiritual benefit of this sacrifice far outweighs any sense of ownership or attachment to the material world.

Study tip

Always remember to point out the textual evidence of what the Qur'an teaches in support for teachings on alms. The band descriptors for AO1 expect 'Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate' (Level 5 AO1 band descriptor).

Due to the obligatory nature of the fourth pillar, and the ideals above, there is a strong disapproval of showing off one's generosity in Islam. To re-iterate, the context of opportunity afforded to the wealthy is not self-made but God-given. With this in mind, self-gratification is totally alien to the spirit of the fourth pillar.

The reasons for giving in Islam can therefore be summarised in four ways: obedience; compassion; personal sacrifice; value of benefits gained. This list is not exhaustive; however, it does indicate a level of priority when dealing with zakat:

- Obedience to the wishes of Allah
- Compassion for others
- Personal sacrifice through prioritising Allah and others before oneself
- The individual and communal benefits of physical and spiritual rewards.

Sura 2:177 reads

'Goodness does not consist of turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in God and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travellers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage.' (Yusuf Ali)

3. Explain the reasons for giving in Islam. (A01)

The main reason.... one of the five pillars is Zakat so it is essential that...

Another reason is ...the Qur'an states that...

Further reason is because... it supports the Ummah because...

Esposito says that giving is something Muslims have to do because...

Sadaqah also highlights importance of giving...

The reasons for giving can be summarised...

Liberationist Thinking in Islam

What do we mean by liberationist?

Seeking of equal status or just treatment for any group believed to be discriminated against.

4. Read the excerpt below and briefly answer the questions over page:

The importance of liberationist thinking in Islam and attitudes towards the poor; the impact of giving on the ummah

The use of alms for the poor is manifold: it is used for orphans, for widows, (originally) to free slaves and to cut the chains of debt, to support work in the cause of God (and workers). In general, giving functions as a Muslim 'social security' as it allows wealth to circulate more fairly in society' (Maqsood).

There is a strong understanding in Islam that the fortunes of humanity are not self-made but God-given. All peoples are equal in the eyes of God and therefore the unequal distribution of wealth as it unfolds in our corrupt and ignorant world is a clear opportunity for Muslims, especially those who are blessed with wealth, to redress the imbalance.

This means that the mentality of giving imposes a psychological sense of duty as well as direct obedience to the will of Allah. The poor are not beggars, nor do they receive charity as the term is commonly understood: 'Zakat is not charity, but the rightful and legal claim of the poor against the rich.' (Horrie and Chippindale)

Indeed, the idea of serving the poor is integral to both major festivals. Following the Hajj, food is distributed to the poor, and after Ramadan is over it is integral to the celebrations to offer gifts to the poor. For example, Muslim Aid UK encourages the act of giving donations during Ramadan as Muslims reflect on their own fortunate situations in relation to those that are less fortunate.

This redressing the imbalance, then, has a huge impact upon the Muslim community (ummah) and impacts upon it in several ways:

- All needs are met, no matter how poor
- Equality and unity is achieved
- The aims of the ummah ('brotherhood') are achieved
- As in the time of Muhammad, widows and orphans are not neglected
- It creates a sense of communal spirituality.

In practice, in daily life, this idea of being generous is also reflected in the prohibition of *riba* (interest) on any loans, a key moral principle for Muslims. The development of Islamic banking is a real example of how this works in the world. Islamic banking offers interest free banking due to the prohibition of *riba*. In Islam, however, *riba* is not simply the main thrust of banking: emphasis is given to profit-sharing; a focus on advance purchase with later sale at marked up price; leasing; and, equity sharing.

The commercial practice of Islamic banking began with farmers in Pakistan and in Egypt in the 1960s but later spread to the Gulf, Malaysia and Indonesia. The concept of Islamic banking also embraces wider principles that aim to be conducive towards a truly Islamic economic order. Such principles involve: the right to pursue economic well-being but not at the expense of moral or social injustice; the right to own wealth but balanced by

the need and duty to spend wisely, mercifully and not to squander; to reduce surplus held by an individual for the benefit of society (the ummah) as a whole through taxation (zakat); to control laws of inheritance and avoid accumulation of wealth for the few.

Q4.

Briefly state why Islam could be classed as liberationist?

By tackling imbalance- what impact does this have on the Ummah? Read bullet points on page 32.

What does Islamic banking try to achieve?

THE HAJJ

Really basic but good starting point: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMWgeSuHKhs>

5. EXPLAIN THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE HAJJ (A01)

Create an essay plan to answer the question above. First, read the pages below...

The nature and purpose of the Hajj

At least once in his or her lifetime, every adult Muslim who is physically and financially able is required to make the sacrifice of time, possessions, status, and normal comforts necessary to make this pilgrimage, becoming a pilgrim totally at God's service.' (Esposito)

Hajj is pilgrimage. There is a clear link here to the traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia and to the holy site of Makkah (Mecca) at the time of Muhammad. Again, like prayer, fasting and giving, pilgrimage is not restricted to any one time although the minimum requirement is dictated by the fifth pillar.

The Hajj takes place during the first two weeks of 12th month of the Muslim calendar. The non-obligatory (*umra*) version of a pilgrimage can take place at any time.

Umra and Hajj

Although the actions involved in umra compare to Hajj, there are some significant differences: unlike Hajj, which is performed during the prescribed month, umra can be performed at any time of the year.

Other differences include: there is no 'standing' at Arafat; nor 'standing' at Muzdalifa; prayer is stopped upon arriving at the Haram; there is also no stay at Mina; and, sacrifice is not offered in umra.

Similarities include: the pilgrim puts on the *ihram*; after prayer pilgrims circle the Ka'aba and perform two rakahs at the station of Ibrahim; pilgrims then perform 'running'; finally, on finishing, men shave their head or cut their hair while the women cut a lock of their hair.

Conditions for performing Hajj

There are certain criteria to meet for Hajj:

- Hajj must be performed at least once in a Muslim's lifetime.
- One must be of good mental health.
- One must be of good physical health.
- One must be able to afford the Hajj without incurring debt.
- One must be able to provide for dependants whilst on Hajj.
- Intention to sacrifice one's time, possessions, status, and normal comforts must be the reason as well as obedience to God's will.

The Hajj takes place in Makkah (Mecca) and the focus of the Hajj is the Ka'aba stone. This is a square-shaped building, constructed of grey stone and marble and stands in the centre of the great mosque. It measures 12 metres (L) x 10 metres (W) x 15 metres (H).

Key terms

Hajj: pilgrimage

Ihram: a state of purity recognised by ablutions and dress

Umra: extra, voluntary pilgrimage beyond Hajj

Key quote

To take part in Hajj Muslim men must be sane, free from serious physical infirmity and - most importantly - able to provide for their dependants whilst they are away. (Horrie and Chippindale)

To the eastern corner is the famous black stone (*hajar al-aswad*) that pilgrims long to touch or kiss. It is believed that Hagar and Ishmael (Abraham's wife and son) are buried under the northwest wall. Tradition recounts that it was Abraham who first introduced the rites of Hajj and that this pilgrimage had eventually become corrupted. Hajj is derived from a word meaning 'circle' and refers to the practice of going around the stone known as *tawaf*.

The Hajj itself is not simply a visit to the Ka'aba. The whole process of Hajj is much more involved and takes several days to perform. It also has, like the other four pillars before it, a deeper significance than the mere physical act. It is a journey that describes 'the temporary physical movement of the individual from the "this-worldly" to the "other-worldly" while still on earth' (Turner). The *talbiyah* prayer that remembers God's command to perform Hajj marks the beginning of this journey.

The route of the Hajj

In the Sura entitled 'Pilgrimage' it states:

'And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways. 'That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days appointed, over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, perform their vows, and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House.'" (22:27 Yusuf Ali)

The best way to understand Hajj is to chronologically investigate the route that is taken. Overall, it takes seven days to perform.

Day 1

The first day is a day for preparation: every Muslim must be in a state of *ihram*, that is, to be pure and clean before God. To symbolise this, white clothing is worn. The two simple white sheets symbolise not only purity, but also modesty, equality, and obedience. It is symbolic of a physical, mental and spiritual purity. To signify this every Muslim must abstain from sex, violence and even any thoughts of such sinful action, thinking only of God and goodness.

Day 2

On day two the pilgrims enter the great mosque and perform seven circumambulations of the Ka'aba. This is done anticlockwise and starts from the black stone. This represents the centrality of God in their lives. Every pilgrim offers two rakahs of what is submission to God. Then, following the *sa'y* (a lively exertion) is performed by walking between the two hills of *al-Safa* and *al-Marwa*. This emulates the trials and tribulations of Hagar in searching for water for herself and her son Ishmael. At the end of *sa'y*, pilgrims take some of the *zamzam* water (a spring that God causes to miraculously appear), which has suggested healing properties. At midday there is then a move to Mina for prayers.

Day 3

The third day sees a move from Mina nine miles east to the plain of Arafat. Here is practised *wuquf*, which means 'standing', and represents a believer standing before his or her Creator and asking for forgiveness. A sermon is delivered which remembers Muhammad's sermon on his final pilgrimage. During the evening there is a move to Muzdalifah, where evening prayers are performed and each pilgrim stays out all night in the open air.

Key terms

Al-Safa and al-Marwa: two hills between which Hagar ran to find water

Hajar al-aswad: the black stone housed at the eastern corner of the Ka'aba

Sa'y: an effort to move between two hills

Talbiyah: the beginning prayer of Hajj

Tawaf: circling

Wuquf: literally, 'standing' before God

Zamzam: famous spring of water believed to be discovered by Hagar and provided by God

Day 4

From here, day four sees a move to the valley of Mina for the 'stoning of Satan'. This involves the throwing of stones at three stone pillars in order to renounce evil. It commemorates Ibrahim rejecting Satan's suggestion that he should not kill his son Isaac in following the command of God. If a pilgrim is too infirm to sacrifice every goat, or camel just as Ibrahim did, it is at this point that male Muslims are encouraged to shave their heads and the point at which the three day festival of *Id-ul-Adha* begins, marking the culmination of Hajj.

Study tip

This section is also full of new concepts. In revising, instead of just drawing up a glossary of key terms, try linking each term together so that you have a rough idea of the journey of the Hajj. Shows an ability to present the inter-relatedness of the pillars and demonstrate 'extensive depth and/or breadth' (AO1 band 5 descriptor).

Days 5 and 6

Pilgrims spend two days moving between Mina and Makkah doing circumambulations and performing more ritual stonings.

Day 7

Pilgrims return to Makkah for the final time and commence finishing celebrations. In essence, there are four significant rites that mark the official completion of Hajj:

- *Ihram*
- *Talbiyah* prayer ('At your command ... without equal ... I am here')
- *Tawaf* (circling)
- *Wuquf* (standing).

Those who complete Hajj are given the honourable title *haji*; however, it can only be truly done with pure intention and without self-interest. Indeed, it is said that one is in a better state not doing Hajj than if Hajj is done with wrong intentions and motives. True, there are always temptations and distractions; for example, today the shops and 'commercialism' involved with Hajj may draw one away from the real reason for its existence. Nonetheless, a true pilgrim has all this in perspective. The whole journey is like a return home to the essence and source of Islam.

It is this 'perspective' that triumphs when one considers the busy nature of Hajj, for example, the sheer practicality of it happening today with stones hitting people and potential crushes at certain points along the way. The Saudi Royal Family have responded by building better routes and any conflicts about Hajj being commercialised must be seen with this in mind.

Following completion of the Hajj every year there is the annual festival of *Id-ul-Adha*. A major part of the festival involves sacrificing an animal just as Ibrahim did as an act of obedience and faith. However, it is not a sacrifice to Allah for forgiveness of sins; rather, it is to remember the importance of faith and obedience as reflected in the character of Ibrahim. As Sura 22:37 states: 'It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah. It is your piety that reaches Him: He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify Allah for His Guidance to you and proclaim the good news to all who do right.' (Yusuf Ali)

Key terms

Haji: one who has completed the Hajj

Id-ul-Adha: the celebration at the end of Hajj

Key quote

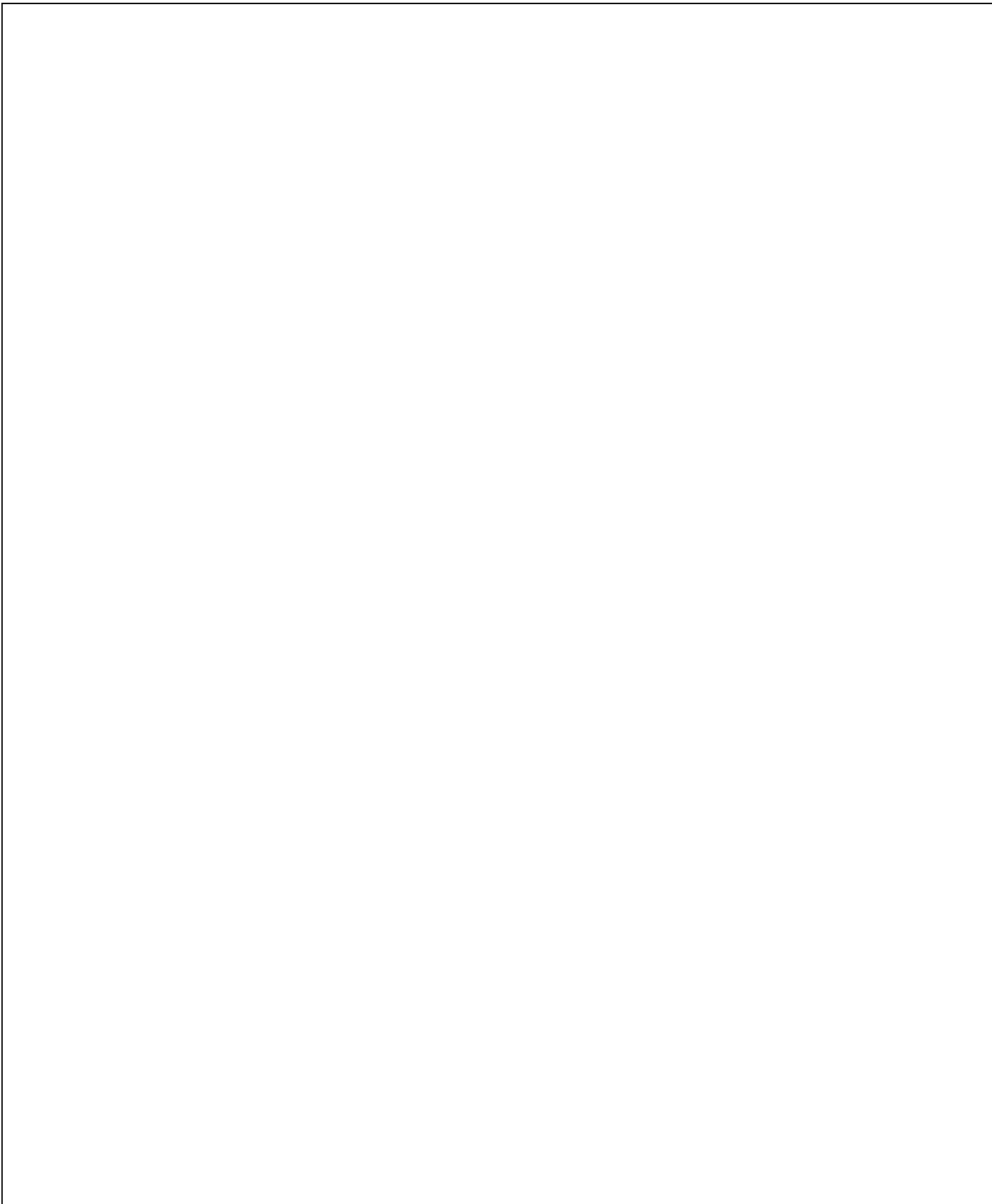
The Qur'an insists that man is not judged by the number of righteous deeds that he performs, but by the substrata of sincere belief that underpins them.¹ (Turner)

Key quote

The journey to Mecca is both physical and metaphorical: physical in the sense that one moves through time and space leaving one's homeland behind; a sense that one moves upwards, hopefully in an ascension towards God, leaving one's self behind. (Turner)

6. EXPLAIN THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE HAJJ (A01)

Create an essay plan to answer the question above. What sources would you include?



7. Brainstorm the role of the Hajj in uniting the Ummah over page.

The role of Hajj in uniting the ummah

It has been observed so far that the two pillars of zakat and Hajj, as indeed each of the pillars in turn, are like 'emblems' (Turner) that 'point to deeper truths'. In other words, they are simply the surface of Islamic practice as all life in its entirety is seen as an act of worship (*ibadah*) towards God. In terms of symbolism and unpacking the theological significance of the pillars, it has been commented that there are 'as many interpretations as there are Muslim scholars' (Turner).

Despite this, there is a broad consensus as to the basic implications that Hajj has for Muslims collectively and how it impacts upon the Muslim community (ummah). Several significant features help to unite the Muslim community:

- The significance of *ihram* is not just one of purity but also due to the simple white clothing it also conveys the message of equality.
- The celebrations of *Id-ul-Adha* unite the pilgrims as a microcosmic ummah.
- *Id-ul-Adha* is celebrated by all Muslims worldwide (the macrocosmic ummah).
- *Id-ul-Adha* is a public holiday in Muslim countries.
- Self-sacrifice and giving is encouraged.
- Unity in belief through remembrance of Ibrahim's sacrifice.
- The wider ummah is appreciated through splitting the meat from the sacrifice into thirds for family, friends and the poor.
- It is also obligatory to give money to charity to be used to help poor people buy new clothes and food so they too can celebrate Id.

One website observes about the offering of meat: 'The act symbolises our willingness to give up things that are of benefit to us or close to our hearts, in order to follow Allah's commands. It also symbolises our willingness to give up some of our own bounties, in order to strengthen ties of friendship and help those who are in need. We recognise that all blessings come from Allah, and we should open our hearts and share with others.'
(Islam.about.com)

Key quote

Sura 22:36

The sacrificial camels we have made for you as among the symbols from Allah. In them is (much) good for you: then pronounce the name of Allah over them as they line up (for sacrifice): when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), eat ye thereof, and feed such as (beg not but) live in contentment, and such as beg with due humility: thus have We made animals subject to you, that ye may be grateful. (Yusuf Ali

7. Brainstorm the role of the Hajj in uniting the Ummah

8. Read the excerpt below and create an Agree/ Disagree Table for this question:

The Hajj is a personal journey for Muslims. Evaluate this view.

Whether the Hajj is more than just a personal journey of religious enquiry

To say that the Hajj is more than just a personal journey of religious enquiry may well be offensive to those who have had the personal experience of pilgrimage to Makkah. There may not be a strong, if any at all, argument that can counter the statement in the view of many; however, we should avoid demeaning the experience itself.

In many ways it is the most important personal journey of religious enquiry in that it is classed as above and beyond anything in comparison to other religious experiences a Muslim may have. Indeed, the once-in-a-lifetime experience cannot be duplicated. It is of great personal devotional value and one through which a Muslim can become closer to Allah, the ummah and the history of their faith.

Nonetheless, in support of the statement, the purpose of Hajj has many underlining and essential features that go beyond the personal experience. It is an act of worship and obedience that is supported by the whole ummah worldwide. It is Qur'an based, so universal, and follows the example of Muhammad. The commitment and willingness to suffer hardship, and the sacrifice of time and money, are shared by all those who perform Hajj. In addition, ihram is a collective state of spiritual purity; a rejection of the material world, and an embracement of hardship for the sake of Allah in anticipation of judgement. Pilgrims stand before Allah united and equal.

There is also the social focus of concern for the poor. Integral to the distribution of the sacrifice is the consideration of the plight of others when offering a third to the poor. Indeed, the celebrations involved with Id-ul-Adha at the end of Hajj are not just with the rest of the pilgrims but also with the worldwide ummah.

Another factor that makes Hajj more than a personal journey is the remembering of significant historical events relevant to the Muslim faith. For example, the stories of Adam and Eve, Musa and Ibrahim; however, what makes them more than personal is the communal way in which they are remembered by all pilgrims together.

Then again, although done in unity, it must be remembered that the Hajj is essentially a personal religious journey, but not necessarily just of religious enquiry; it could be argued that it is better seen as one of religious and spiritual development. In conclusion, then, yes it is certainly more than religious enquiry, that is, a personal pursuit of spiritual learning and enrichment; but this does not in any way diminish its value as a personal journey of religious enquiry.

Indeed, the Hajj is both a personal experience that is very important to the individual, and also a collective experience that is important for every pilgrim. The personal journey of religious enquiry, whilst crucial for the religious experience of an individual Muslim, can never be divorced from the wider context of what that experience means and the enrichment it brings to the worldwide community of believers, that is, the ummah as a whole.

9. The Hajj is a personal journey for Muslims. Evaluate this view.

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The Hajj is a personal journey for Muslims. Evaluate this view.

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10. The most important act in Islam is supporting the poor. Evaluate this view.

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The most important act in Islam is supporting the poor. Evaluate this view.

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